



XEMA JAMESONII.

Jameson's Gull.

Crimson-billed Gull, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. x. p. 145.

Larus Jamesonii, Wils. Ill. Zool., pl. xxiii.—List of Birds in Brit. Mus. Coll., part iii. p. 171.

— *scopulinus*, Forst. Drawings, tab. 109, very young.

Silver Gull, List of Birds in Tasmanian Journal, vol. i. p. 58.

Djê-je-nup, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.

Little Gull, of the Colonists of ditto.

THIS beautiful species of Gull is abundantly dispersed over the coast of Van Diemen's Land and the southern coasts of Australia generally; it also frequents the rivers and inland lakes wherever they occur of any extent. There is a Gull in Torres' Straits so similar to the bird here represented, that its larger size is the only difference I have been able to detect between them; should future research prove them to be mere local varieties, then the range of this species may be said to extend over the whole of the coasts of Australia. Although never characterized by any dark colouring of the head, it is in every respect a true *Xema*; like the other members of that genus, it frequently congregates in immense flocks, and colonies of many hundreds have been found breeding together, sometimes on the marshes, at other times on the low small islands; a colony of this kind existed on Great Actæon Island in D'Entrecasteaux' Channel when I visited it in 1838.

The flight of this little Gull is light and buoyant in the extreme, it runs over the surface of the ground with lightness and great facility, and it is altogether one of the most beautiful and fairy-like birds I have ever met with.

Its nest is formed of a few rushes and grasses, and it lays four or five eggs, which differ considerably in colour, hardly any two being alike; the ground colour varying from pale greenish to dark brownish olive; in some instances slightly, in others largely blotched and streaked with blackish brown; they also vary in shape, some being shorter and thicker than others.

The two sexes are precisely alike in colour and may be thus described:—

Head, neck, all the under surface, spurious wing, rump and tail white; back and wings delicate grey; primaries white, eccentrically marked with black, largely on their inner and narrowly on their outer webs, and largely tipped with the same hue with a slight fringe of white at the extremity; eyelash, bill, legs and feet deep blood-red; nails black; irides pearl-white.

The figures are of the natural size.